

Vol.36

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24

VERY SPECIAL ARTS INDIA



Vision of an Inclusive community Strength in shared resources Artistic expression that unites us all



MISSION STATEMENT

"No mental or physical challenge need ever limit the human potential to create and excel."

VSA Stands for:

- **Vision of an inclusive community.**
- **Strength through shared resources.**
- **Artistic expression that unites us all.**
- **Economic self-reliance through vocational training.**

VISION

Promoting the creative power in people with disabilities. To create an inclusive society where each member gets a chance to learn a vocational skill and exhibit their talents, earn their livelihood and build a sense of self worth.

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO

Established in 1986, Very Special Arts India (VSAI) is a non-profit organization working with the disabled and underprivileged young population of India. The organization was conceived to fill a very special slot. It seeks uniquely to work with disabilities via remedial therapies including dance, drama, music, visual arts and crafts. Using the arts as a tool for social, educational, emotional and vocational rehabilitation, VSAI attempts to nurture talented artists, provide them with a platform to display their accomplishments, build self-esteem and facilitate their smooth integration into mainstream society in which they have as much a right to belong as anybody. In recent years, VSAI also provides vocational training to children with special needs and underprivileged youth to make them self-reliant. Every volunteer and worker in VSAI follows the credo: to fortify the belief of those less privileged, that, no mental or physical challenge need ever limit the human potential to create and excel.

OUR GUIDING LIGHT

**DR. MEERA SINGH, PH.D
FOUNDER SECRETARY &
MEMBER**



As we go to press, I am elated to note that this is the 36 th issue of the VSAI magazine. At age 83, looking back, I am aware how much of my past and present are interlinked with VSAI, and how heartening it is to note what a long way we have come from where we started. Decades back, a small group of us volunteers met and enthusiastically settled on starting a voluntary organization based on the use of fine arts to serve special needs children and promote their integration in society. The concept of using performing and creative arts such as music, dance, drama, painting, pottery etcetera as therapy was relatively new and we were gratified to get the required guidance from Very Special Arts International – a US based organization founded by the eminent Kennedy family in memory of one of the Kennedy members who was challenged. Our association with the apex organization enabled us to apply some of the tested methods of serving special needs children. It also gave unusual opportunities to our challenged children and youth to participate in international events and enter art and other contests held by the international organization.

Our approach of using fine arts as valuable therapeutic tools met with commendable success locally within Delhi and nationally across India when several schools and institutions dealing with special needs children started participating in our cultural and sporting events. These developments are shared with readers in every issue of our Newsletter. As our work and recognition grew, in addition to children, we were able to extend our services to special needs youth and women. We also broadened our approach from recreational therapy to include occupational training and employment generation for our challenged people. In addition to the special needs population we offer those services to the socioeconomically underprivileged.

To help run our expanded activities, we have been blessed with an unusually dedicated team of volunteers and trainers many of whom work without compensation. So much of our work and success depends on the support of the remarkable team of teachers and trainers and on many others who donate their time and funds to help us run our center. Our director Ms. Sonia Sahny is a welcome addition to VSAI under whose deft leadership VSAI is bound to blossom and reach greater heights. We are thankful for her presence and also for our Board members whose guidance has kept us rooted in our mission to help the challenged and the underprivileged. A word of thanks especially to the visionary – Ms. Moyna Singh – who brought the vision of using fine arts as therapy to heal, train and integrate special needs children to us. The youngest of the founding members, wise beyond her years, with indefatigable energy to raise funds, she enabled us to turn our dream into reality.

EDITORIAL

SONIA SAHNY DIRECTOR VSAI



As a Director, I have had the privilege of experiencing a profound transformation in both my professional journey and personal outlook on life. Working within this dynamic sector has not only enriched my career but has also provided me with a fresh perspective that extends far beyond the realms of traditional employment.

First and foremost, Very Special Arts has offered me the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to causes that resonate deeply with my values and aspirations. Every day, I witness the tangible impact of our organization's efforts on the lives of individuals and communities we serve. Whether it's providing rehabilitation facilities to neurodivergent individuals, educational resources to underserved youth, supporting vocational initiatives and other trainings for marginalized populations, each initiative reinforces my belief in the power of collective action and compassionate leadership.

Moreover, my role within the organisation has broadened my horizons by exposing me to diverse perspectives and challenges. Collaborating with stakeholders from different backgrounds, including beneficiaries, volunteers, donors, and fellow professionals, has fostered a spirit of collaboration and empathy within me. I have learned to appreciate the complexities of social issues and the importance of adopting inclusive approaches to problem-solving. This multidimensional experience has honed my ability to navigate ambiguity, innovate creatively, and adapt strategies to achieve sustainable outcomes.

On a personal level, working for a nonprofit organization has been transformative. It has instilled in me a profound sense of purpose and fulfilment, far exceeding the conventional metrics of career success. It has taught me the invaluable lesson of gratitude and humility, reminding me of the privilege and responsibility that comes with making a positive impact in the lives of others.

Furthermore, it has also provided me with opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth. From acquiring new skills in fundraising and resource management to honing my leadership and advocacy abilities, every experience has contributed to my development as a well-rounded professional. The collaborative environment of our organization encourages innovation and experimentation, allowing me to explore innovative solutions and expand my strategic thinking capabilities.

In conclusion, my journey has been nothing short of transformative. Through meaningful work, diverse collaborations, and personal growth, I have gained a newfound appreciation for the profound impact of service and compassion. As I continue to navigate this rewarding path, I am committed to leveraging my experiences and insights to create lasting change and empower individuals and communities towards a bright future.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Vocational training, Functional education and Art therapy are three pillars of education for the specially abled students at VSAI. We were able to touch the lives of more than 750 students in the year gone by.

VSAI is dedicated to providing comprehensive special education programs that cater to diverse skills and abilities. Through movement therapy, participants engage in dance and interactive games that promote physical coordination and social interaction. Therapy sessions within this program emphasize sensory integration and emotional expression.

Art plays a pivotal role at VSAI, with activities such as diya painting, block painting, and paper bag crafts fostering creativity and fine motor skills. These artistic endeavors encourage self-expression and boost confidence.

Listening skills are honed through music appreciation and computer-assisted learning, promoting auditory processing and cognitive development. Cooking classes not only teach culinary skills but also enhance listening abilities through recipe comprehension and kitchen teamwork.

At VSAI, each activity is thoughtfully designed to support holistic development and empower individuals to reach their full potential in a nurturing and inclusive environment.

POOJA SINGH
SPECIAL EDUCATOR



MUSIC
DANCE



COOKING
ART & CRAFT

FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION

We are grateful to Bollore Logistics for their continuous support and encouragement in running the Special Education Programme.

WEAVING
THEATRE **STITCHING**
COMPUTER EDUCATION



POTTERY
YOGA **CANDLE MAKING** **BLOCK PRINTING**



INTER SCHOOL CONTESTS

VSAI holds several interschool contests through the year. These events are a means of showcasing the hidden talents of our differently abled students, a powerful tool in building their confidence and self esteem. Last year seven such contests were held. Almost 750 students from nearly 30 schools, Pan India participated in them. Our students also participated in several such events hosted by other schools.

COMPETITION

YOGA



COMPETITION

RANGOLI MAKING



COMPETITION

ANNUAL DANCE & DRAMA



COMPETITION

CARROM



COMPETITION

ANNUAL ART



COMPETITION

COMPUTER FESTIVAL



ON THE SPOT PAINTING COMPETITION

GURU GYAN

Neha Agarwal, Yoga trainer

We learn twice when we teach. I completed my six months in the reputed institute VSAI and I want to show my gratitude to all the teachers and specially the management for trusting me and giving me this responsibility. Sonia ma'am has always guided me when needed and motivated me to grow, learn and explore with new areas which can be fruitful to the students. She has also made me aware of certain behaviors of the students which helped me to understand them better and work on their skills. It was an enriching experience for my students as well as for me.

One of the major milestone was the yoga competition in which students participated enthusiastically along with around ten more schools. Many Students not only call the name of the asanas but also perform or tell their favourite asanas happily. Making sound of different animals is a hit among the students and I enjoy imparting my learnings in an interactive way. I look forward to continuing this journey of teaching and learning with VSAI team.



Neeraj Kapoor, Music Trainer



I have been teaching music to the special needs students for the past 25 years. As I complete my silver jubilee here, I am happy to say that my journey has been full of learning and many sweet memories have been created along the way.

I thank the management of VSAI for supporting me and giving me an opportunity to be a part of such a noble mission.

Music is food for the soul, and much more so for these students. They look forward to their weekly classes with me as much as I do. I teach them both instrumental and vocal music.

The older students play the congo and keyboard, while the younger ones are masters of percussion. Instruments like triangle, tambourine, manjeera and hand shakers comprise the percussion band of the class. Students enjoy singing patriotic, devotional and motivational songs. Some of the students attempt singing pure classical tunes based on Indian ragas and I must say that they are brilliant. Singing the SARGAM is thoroughly enjoyed by all. These students have a brilliant sense of rhythm in both vocal and instrumental music.

It's a delight to see these children perform on stage. We are preparing for an inter school Sangeet Baithak these days. We will be participating in solo singing and percussion band. My good wishes and blessings are with all the students.

PICNICS & VISITS

Tangible learning experiences are important for all students. They put to use more than one sense organ, in turn making learning more permanent. This is truer for children with special needs. It helps them build connections at more than one level. The social-emotional interaction in field trips leads to a growth in their independence and confidence.

Delhi is an architectural and historical delight. We went for six field trips last year. The mention of Field trips brings a smile on the faces of our students. They look forward to the bus ride and the picnic after. Guided field trips are organised wherever needed and possible.



SHANKAR'S DOLLS MUSEUM

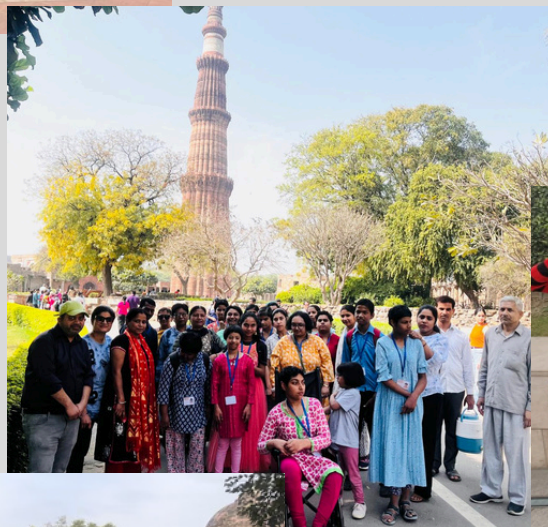


INDIA GATE & WAR MEMORIAL



MOGLY'S PETTING FARM

GANDHI SMRITI



QUTAB MINAR LODHI GARDEN



CELEBRATIONS

At VSAI we do not need a reason to have a party for the students. Our aim is to spread smiles and cheer amongst our students. Celebrations and Festivals are an important part of VSAI, just as they are a part of our Indian culture. We celebrate all important National Days with enthusiasm. Student birthdays are celebrated with the same energy at VSAI. Dance, music and traditional sweets are a part of all festival parties.

INDEPENDENCE DAY



RAM LILA



DIWALI



CHRISTMAS



REPUBLIC DAY



HOLI



COMPUTER EDUCATION

The Computer Training Programme at VSAI has been recognized by the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) and Tally as an accredited training center, allowing us to offer their certified courses. We conduct short-term modules and while these are designed to be standalone, they are structured to enable seamless progression from one level to the next. Upon completing the modules, students receive a certification which significantly enhances employment prospects for our graduates, many of whom have secured jobs leveraging the skills acquired through our computer courses. Our primary focus has been on supporting young adults with special needs and those from low socio-economic strata through our comprehensive Skill Development Programme. Canva workshops were organised through the year to upskill the students. English Conservation classes were conducted for students looking to better their performance in school and brighten their job prospectives.

Under the guidance of expert faculty, over 250 students were given computer training in 2023-24.

We are grateful to Bollore Logistics for their continuous support and encouragement in running this vocational course.

We would like to acknowledge the support of Sahib Textiles Pvt. Ltd. in revamping our computer lab with 15 new state of the art machines and one laser printer.



DRESS DESIGNING & WEAVING

The Dress Designing and Weaving course at VSAI under the affiliation of Singer India attracts a diverse range of participants, eager to learn stitching and weaving skills. Our enrollees include recently graduated young girls, individuals with no prior school experience, and mature women seeking to refine their existing stitching abilities. The program comprises a basic and an advanced course run annually, catering to varied skill levels and aspirations in dressmaking.

Within our weaving unit, standout products include pouches and shopping bags crafted from recycled wool and plastic, reflecting our commitment to environment. These items have proven to be among our top sellers, embodying our dedication to sustainability and innovation.

We were able to touch the lives of 100 students last year.



We are grateful to Bollore Logistics for their continuous support and encouragement in running this vocational course.



We thank Rotary Club of Delhi Premier for giving us new sewing machines and the tie up with Singer India for certification in Fashion.

BLOCK PRINTING

The Block Printing course comprises both fundamental and advanced components, guided by a highly skilled instructor with a multi-generational background in this craft. Students are producing exceptional works of art, including, kurta sets, suits, and table runners, etc.

We are committed to advancing this traditional art form, pledging to make significant contributions to the Indian Textile Industry through our efforts. Our goal is to preserve and innovate within this rich heritage, ensuring its enduring relevance and impact.

80 students passed out last year, many of whom are either self employed or working for production houses.

We are grateful to Bollore Logistics for their continuous support and encouragement in running this vocational course.



CANDLE CRAFT

The Candle-Making Division is overseen by a skilled artisan who manages a team of craftsmen employed by VSAI, each possessing unique abilities. Together, they produce exquisite works of art including diyas, floating candles, block candles, pillar candles; that captivate users at exhibitions as well as from different parts of the country, compelling them to make purchases. The Diwali Season being the busiest of all, lights up our lives. Over 40 students, from disadvantaged backgrounds were trained through the year providing sources of livelihood.

We are grateful to Bollore Logistics for their continuous support and encouragement in running this vocational course.



BEAUTY & WELLNESS

Our Beauty and Wellness program, a transformative make-up and grooming course offered by VSAI, is dedicated to empowering young girls with the skills and confidence needed to achieve financial independence and personal growth.

Through our comprehensive curriculum, participants receive in-depth training in various aspects of beauty and wellness, including make-up application, skincare, hair care, and personal grooming. The course is designed to not only enhance their technical abilities but also to instill a sense of self-worth and professionalism.

Since its inception, our program has successfully trained three batches of aspiring beauty professionals. Each graduate leaves with the knowledge and tools necessary to pursue careers in the beauty industry, opening doors to numerous opportunities and pathways to success.

Over 40 students were trained in the year gone by.



INTERNING @ VSAI

Fostering Social Responsibility and Skill Development

At VSAI, we are proud to host school and college students who intern with us as part of their social work or community service requirements. These internships offer a comprehensive and immersive experience, allowing interns to gain exposure to a wide array of services and programs within our organization.

Interns engage in and contribute to:

- Special and Functional Education: Assisting in the educational development of children with disabilities, helping to create inclusive learning environments.
- Remediation Programs: Supporting initiatives aimed at improving the educational outcomes of underprivileged youth.
- Observership in Various Units: Gaining hands-on experience in diverse areas such as candle-making, block-printing, art, music, theatre, and more.

This immersive internship experience not only provides interns with valuable skill-building opportunities but also promotes empathy, understanding, and mutual respect among all participants. The collaborative nature of the internship fosters a deeper appreciation for the challenges and strengths of individuals with disabilities and those from underprivileged backgrounds.

We welcome and value the participation of these young interns and look forward to continuing our efforts to create a supportive and enriching environment for all involved.

COMMUNITY SERVICE WEEK



Each year, our organization has the privilege of welcoming a group of Grade 9 and 10 students from The British School, Delhi as part of their Community Service Week initiative. This week-long program is designed to foster meaningful interactions and collaborative projects between the visiting students and our specially-abled students.

Throughout the week, the students engage in a variety of hands-on activities, working alongside our special students in areas such as candle-making, canvas painting, block printing and weaving.

The week culminates in a reflective session, where both groups share their experiences, insights, and personal growth from the collaborative efforts. This is followed by a special luncheon, graciously hosted by the students of The British School, Delhi, as a gesture of friendship and celebration of the bonds formed during the week.

We are immensely grateful to The British School, Delhi for their continued partnership and dedication to this enriching program. Their commitment to community service and inclusivity greatly enhances the lives of our special students, leaving a lasting impression on all involved.

IMPACT STORY Refelections of volunteers



Yashna Kapur, Moglykids Foundation

On behalf of our organisation Moglykids foundation, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for the incredible experience you provided to us while we performed for special needs children during the Ramlila play at your NGO and their visit to our animal petting farm. It was heartwarming to witness their joy and engagement throughout the performance.

Equally memorable was your visit to our animal petting farm. The children had the opportunity to interact with gentle animals, learn about their care, and experience the therapeutic benefits of being close to nature. The smiles on their faces as they fed the goats, petted the rabbits, and listened to the chirping birds were priceless. As we reflect on this beautiful collaboration, we feel blessed to have served the students of Very Special Art India, and could bring joy to countless hearts.

Mamta Kochhar, Artist & Educationist

One is always sceptical going to a charitable organisation, thinking about the cleanliness, the management and the treatment one will receive while getting in. VSAI (Very Special Arts India) in Vasant Kunj, leaves no page unturned to make all your inhibitions vanish into thin air. The place has a small green patch in front, clean reception area and spic and span bathrooms. The management and students are very forthcoming and polite.

I had a wonderful week working as an art mentor with these exceptionally talented students. It was fun and the students made me feel much at ease with their love and affection. The team here was very supportive. They helped in every way, be it requirement of material or organising the daily chores. I wish VSAI the very best for all their future endeavours.



Ritu Desai, Make-Up and Wellness Professional

I came to know about VSAI from my friend, who also happens to be the director at the organisation. She wanted to expand the skill- training courses offered at VSAI, with an idea to introduce beauty and makeup training. Thus began my journey with this beautiful space. Coming from a background of teaching and having knowledge of professional makeup, we got the infrastructure and course structure ready and before long the first batch graduated after a theory and practical exam. It seems like yesterday, but many more batches have successfully enrolled and graduated since. However, my visits to VSAI take me to the other departments too as I am an art and craft nerd and love learning and observing. I have always felt that the VSA campus is full of



positive energy that envelopes me as soon as I step in. I am so grateful that it has opened its doors for me to experience its warmth.

HOW TO SUPPORT VSAI



Supporting Our Mission: The Backbone of Our Success

At our NGO, all services provided are entirely free of charge. This enables us to reach and support a broad range of individuals who might otherwise lack access to essential resources. To sustain and expand our initiatives, we rely heavily on the generous donations from individuals and groups who believe in our mission.

Our work is significantly bolstered by the invaluable contributions of volunteers from both within India and around the world. These dedicated individuals selflessly offer their time, skills, and expertise, playing a crucial role in the successful execution and growth of our programs. We deeply appreciate and value their unwavering support and commitment.

We are proud to foster an inclusive and diverse environment, welcoming students from various backgrounds, mental health professionals, other working professionals, homemakers, and individuals from all walks of life.

There are numerous ways to get involved and make a meaningful impact:

- **Donations:** Financial contributions help us maintain and expand our free services.
- **Volunteering:** Participation by sharing your expertise in our educational and training programmes and workshops enriches our community.
- **Events:** Simply being an audience member at our children's performances, competitions, and exhibitions shows support and encouragement.
- **Purchase of products:** Purchasing products made by our students, like candles, woven articles of everyday use and block printed tableware/clothing help us in generating funds for the organisation and generating employment opportunity for the students, thereby leading to their financial support.

Every form of support, whether through donations, active volunteer participation, attendance, or purchasing from VSAI, significantly contributes to the fulfilment of our mission. Your involvement not only aids in the practical aspects of our work but also provides emotional and moral support to the children and individuals we serve.

Join us in making a difference! Together, we can continue to empower and uplift communities, creating a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Every drop counts, every act of support and kindness helps us complete the bigger picture.
We are grateful for your time, resources and donations.*

Abdul Salam
Abhijit Bose
Adesh Manjit Singh
Aditya Kapoor
Amit Dhawan
Amit Kumar Garg
Amrita Bhalla
Ambita Verdi
Ananya Mehta
Arvind Construction Co. Pvt. Ltd
Ashtbhuj Mega Travels Pvt Ltd
Ashtbhuj Ocean Movers Pvt Ltd
Bharat Bhushan Sahny
Bharti Deveshwar
Bollore Logistics India Private Limited
Brijendra Singh
Capt Sudhir Kapoor
Chaitanya K Pratinidhi
Chetan Marwah
David Lee Yokeum Revocable Living
Deepak Kumar
Divya Upreti
Gaurika Bhalla
Geeta Aagaz
Gitika Kapoor
Global Cargo Services Pvt Ltd.
Gupta Family Foundaton
Guru Prabhijit Singh
Jaya Mehta
Madan Mohan Lal
Madhav Maheshwari
Maj Jasbir Singh
Mamta
Mamta Kochhar
Maryam
Mayanka Kapoor
Medha Singhal
Meera Singh
Mogly's Foundation
Mohammad Naseem Khan
Md. Saddam Gauri
Monica Khanna
Neha Bahuguna
Neeraj Jain
Parbeen Kaur
Pradeep Midha
Priya Dey
Ragini Chandreshakhar
Rajinder Pal Singh
Rakesh Sharma
Ravi Indra Singh Verdi
Reena Kapoor
Revant Mehta
Rita Narula
Ritu Desai
Rocks N Roots
Rohit Khosla
Rotary Club of Delhi Premier
S & G Company
S.A. Consultant & Forwarders Pvt Ltd
Sagar Welfare Foundation
Saheli Bhattacharya
Sahib Textiles Pvt Ltd
Sahny Securities Pvt Ltd
Saloni Budhiraja
Sandeep Anand
Sandeep Mehta
Saraf and Partner
Selan Exploration Technology Ltd
Shashi Jagota
Sheetal Gupta
Skyways Air Services Private Limited
Sneh Awasthi
Soch Foundation
Sonia Sahny
Sujata Appliances
Sunila Awasthi
Suruhi Aggarwal
Sushil Dutt Salwan
Sushma Kapoor
T LakshmiPriya
Uggar Sain Jain Charitable Trust
Usha Sharma
Vijay Lakshmi Vasudev
Vijendra Daulet Singh

Sorry! if we missed your name; it was purely unintentional. We wholeheartedly appreciate your support.

MANAGEMENT

President

Capt. S. Kapoor

Vice President

**Veena Thapar
Nidhi Gupta**

Secretary

Ambita Verdi

Treasurer

Sonia Rasdeep Singh

Executive Members

**Dr. Meera Singh
Priya Dey**

Director

Sonia Sahny

Administrative Manager

Ajay K Singh

Cultural Coordinators

**Neeraj Kapoor
Diksha Upriti**

Vocational Coordinators

**Deepak Ram
Balwinder Kaur
Mohammed Irshaad**

Special Educator

Pooja Singh

Teacher

Sonal Khosla

Trainers

**Baiju
Mukesh
Om Prakash
Paras Sharma
Mandeep Singh
Pinki Chandravanshi
Shanti
Vijay Pal
Amrendra Giri
Ram Kishor
Neha Agarwal
Ravita
Natasha Peter
Gaurav Mehra**

Helper

Choti

Very Special Arts India

**Plot No. 3, Sec-C, Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj
New Delhi-110070, India.Tel: 011-46075972, 9910924238
Email: vsartsindia@gmail.com Website: www.vsartsindia.org**